

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY LONDON

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PORG, EWWT, IMCO

SUBJECT: ADMINISTRATION INITIATIVES ON TANKER SAFETY AND
POLLUTION PREVENTION: VISITS OF U.S. DELEGATION TO
CAPITALS: REPORT OF DELEGATION'S VISIT TO KUWAIT

1. SUMMARY: THE U.S. DELEGATION HAD THREE MEETINGS WITH
A BROAD SPECTRUM OF KUWAITI REPRESENTATIVES INTERESTED IN,
OR AFFECTED BY, THE U.S. PROPOSALS IN IMCO ON TANKER SAFETY
AND POLLUTION PREVENTION (TSPP). THE KUWAITI'S HAD NOT
DISCUSSED THE U.S. PROPOSALS WITH OTHER ARAB STATES AND
HAD NOT YET REACHED A GOK POSITION ON THE U.S. PROPOSALS.
DURING THE VISIT THE KUWAITI'S DECIDED TO SEND A DELEGATION
TO LONDON FOR THE FEBRUARY TSPP CONFERENCE AND FORMED A
WORKING GROUP OF GOVERNMENT, SHIP OPERATORS, PORT OFFICIALS
AND LAWYERS TO COORDINATE GOK POSITIONS. KUWAIT OIL TANKER
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COMPANY (KOTC) DOES NOT FAVOR SEGREGATED BALLAST, BUT IF IT
IS ADOPTED, THEY WOULD WANT IT APPLICABLE TO ALL TANKERS
REGARDLESS OF SIZE. THEY STRONGLY OPPOSE DOUBLE BOTTOMS.
WHILE GOK WOULD SEEM TO BE ABLE TO AFFORD U.S. PROPOSALS ON
EQUIPMENT AND OPERATIONS, THEY LACK THE TECHNICALLY QUALI-
FIED PERSONNEL TO IMPLEMENT THEM. GOK WILL PROBABLY
QUOTE GO ALONG WITH UNQUOTE WHATEVER CONSENSUS EMERGES FROM

IMCO. END OF SUMMARY.

2. U.S. DELEGATION (RADM. BENKERT OF CG AND FSO DIAMANTI) ACCOMPANIED BY EMBASSY POLITICAL COUNSELOR GARRETT SWEANY CALLED ON KUWAITI UNDER SECRETARY OF MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS, ABDUL RAHMAN K. AL-GHUNAIM AT 8 A.M., JANUARY 4. ALTHOUGH CALL WAS INTENDED AS A COURTESY CALL, AL-GHUNAIM TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO INFORM HIMSELF ABOUT KUWAITI PARTICIPATION AT IMCO MEETINGS AND WORKING GROUPS ON TSPP. ALTHOUGH HE COMPLAINED OF KUWAITI LACK OF TECHNICAL PERSONNEL, HE APPARENTLY DECIDED ON THE SPOT THAT KUWAIT WOULD BE REPRESENTED AT THE FEBRUARY CONFERENCE ON TSPP. HE EXPRESSED PLEASURE AT VISIT BY U.S. DELEGATION AND HOPED WE WOULD QUOTE LISTEN TO UNQUOTE THEIR VIEWS. HE INQUIRED ABOUT EGYPTIAN RESPONSE TO OUR VISIT, AND STATED IN ANSWER TO BENKERT'S QUESTION THAT THE KUWAITI'S HAD NOT MET WITH THE OTHER ARAB STATES TO DEVELOP A COMMON POSITION, OR EVEN TO DISCUSS, THE TSPP PROPOSALS. ALTHOUGH GHUNAIM MENTIONED CONCERN ABOUT THE COSTS TO THE GOK OF THE U.S. PROPOSALS, HE ALSO EMPHASIZED KUWAIT'S LACK OF TECHNICAL MANPOWER TO ABSORB AND MANAGE NEW TECHNOLOGY. HE RECOGNIZED THAT KUWAIT HAS SPECIAL POLLUTION PROBLEMS IN THE CLOSED GULF AND RECOGNIZED THE POSSIBILITY OF QUOTE CATASTROPHY UNQUOTE IF A SERIOUS ACCIDENT OCCURRED WITH A LOADED VLCC.

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3. THE DELEGATION NEXT MET WITH CAPT. ABDUL RAHMAN AL-NIBARI, MANAGER OF SHUAIBA PORT; CAPT. NUMAIR NAQIB, KUWAIT IMCO REP; ABDUL RAHIM AL-YAGOOT, KUWAIT IMCO REP; ALI AL-SAMMAK, LEGAL DEPARTMENT, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS; AFIF S. FAKHOURI, KUWAIT OIL TANKER CO. (KOTC); HECTOR OVREVIK (NORWEGIAN) ARAB MARITIME PETROLEUM CO.; FUAD NASIR, AMPTC LAWYER, ACCOMPANIED BY SWEANY AND JUNIOR FSO - DAVID M. STOCKWELL OF THE EMBASSY'S ECONOMIC SECTION. NAGIB, WHO CHAIRED THE MEETING, REVIEWED THE REPORT OF THE JOINT MSC/MEPC, WHICH HE HAD RECENTLY RECEIVED FROM THE U.S. EMBASSY, FOR THE OTHER KUWAITI'S, WHO HAD NOT SEEN IT.

4. FAKHOURI OF KOTC FIRST READ, THEN PASSED OUT COPIES OF, A MEMORANDUM PREPARED BY THE KOTC SHIPOWNERS IN RESPONSE TO OUR TSPP PROPOSALS. KOTC ARE QUOTE IN PRINCIPLE NOT IN FAVOR UNQUOTE OF SBT BECAUSE: (1) IT IS NOT A COMPLETE ANSWER TO THE PROBLEM AND WILL PREVENT FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF ANY IMPROVED SYSTEM, (2) IT WOULD CAUSE TANKER OPERATORS TO LOSE 25-30 PERCENT OF THEIR CARRYING CAPACITY, WHILE HAVING TO BEAR THE COST OF RETROFIT AND MAINTENANCE, (3) IT DOES NOT ELIMINATE THE NECESSITY FOR

ROUTINE TANK WASHING TO REMOVE SLUDGE AND ALSO HAS TO BE VIOLATED AT TIMES IN HEAVY SEAS, (4) IT WOULD WORK AN ECONOMIC HARDSHIP ON OPERATORS OF OLDER BUT ECONOMICALLY EFFICIENT SHIPS (WHICH ADMITTEDLY WOULD BE FAVORED BY SHIPOWNING COUNTRIES WITH TANKER SURPLUSES), (5) BUT IF SBT IS TO BE IMPLEMENTED IT SHOULD THEN BE MADE APPLICABLE TO QUOTE ALL TANKERS IRRESPECTIVE OF SIZE. UNQUOTE KOTC QUOTE STRONGLY OPPOSE UNQUOTE DB WHICH THEY CONSIDER A SAFETY HAZARD (I.E. LEAKAGE). KOTC QUOTE WOULD FULLY SUPPORT UNQUOTE IGS FOR CRUDE CARRIERS BUT HAVE SOME DOUBT ABOUT IGS FOR PRODUCT CARRIERS. KOTC HAVE QUOTE NO OBJECTION UNQUOTE TO A REQUIREMENT FOR A SECOND RADAR. KOTC FEEL COLLISION AVOIDANCE SYSTEMS SHOULD BE EVALUATED OPERATIONALLY BEFORE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ARE SPECIFIED. WITH THE ABOVE RESERVATIONS KOTC WOULD SUPPORT ANY PRACTICAL MEANS OF REDUCING OR ELIMINATING POLLUTION ON PURELY ENVIRONMENTAL GROUNDS, BUT WOULD QUOTE STRONGLY OPPOSE ANY MOVES TAKEN AS A MEANS TO UTILIZE PRESENT EXCESS TANKER TONNAGE UNDER THE GUISE OF ANTI-POLLUTION MEASURES. UNQUOTE THEY FAVOR RECEPTION FACILITIES THE COST OF CONSTRUCTION OF WHICH SHOULD NOT BE BORNE BY SHIPOWNERS.

5. FUAD NASIR OF AMPTC, SPEAKING ONLY FOR KUWAIT, NOT FOR THE OTHER STOCKHOLDER STATES, SAID THEY WERE QUOTE MORE OR LESS OF THE SAME VIEW UNQUOTE AS KOTC. THEY PREFERRED COW TO SBT FOR EXISTING SHIPS, BUT WOULD GENERALLY SUPPORT THE OTHER EQUIPMENT PROPOSALS.

6. NAGIB AND AL-NIBARI INDICATED CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN THE JUNE/JULY STW CONFERENCE. BENKERT PROMISED TO SEND THEM THE PAPERS BEING PREPARED BY USCG FOR CIRCULATION FOR STW. NAGIB ASKED FOR AN EXPLANATION OF THE ALTERNATIVE MANNING PROCEDURE FOR IMPROVED STEERING STANDARDS, WHICH BENKERT GAVE, TO THEIR APPARENT SATISFACTION. THEY SAID THEY HAVE HAD PROBLEMS WITH ENGINE ROOM FAILURE, WHICH THREATENED TO DESTROY THE LOADING PORT FACILITIES, AND WOULD THEREFORE FAVOR THE MANNING REQUIREMENT.

7. ADMIRAL BENKERT PAID A COURTESY CALL ON ABDUL RAHMAN AL-SULTAN OF AMPTC, ACCOMPANIED BY STEVEN BUCK, ECONOMIC COUNSELOR OF THE EMBASSY.

8. THE DELEGATION BRIEFED AMBASSADOR MAESTRONE ON THE VISIT AND EXCHANGED VIEWS ON THE TENDENCY OF THE KUWAITI'S TO MODIFY THEIR POSITIONS TO CONFORM TO AN ARAB CONSENSUS. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IT WAS AGREED THAT THE VISIT WAS APPRECIATED BY GOK AND
WAS MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL.

9. COMMENT: WHILE THE GOK DELEGATION TO THE FEBRUARY
CONFERENCE CAN NOT BE EXPECTED TO BE A VOCAL SUPPORTER
OF THE U.S. PROPOSALS, THERE IS A REASONABLE POSSIBILITY
THAT, EXCEPT FOR DB AND SBT, THE KUWAITI'S WILL GIVE

NON-VOCAL SUPPORT TO A CONSENSUS ON THE REMAINDER OF THE
PROPOSALS.

10. U.S. DELEGATION SENDS. VANCE

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